

a messy drunk by tinytaeil

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Alcohol, Angst, Drunkenness, Friendship, Hurt/Comfort, It is there, Multi, Party, Post-Season/Series 02, Underage Drinking, i'll just chuck in a minor vomit warning, it's just ya classic drunken cry fest, it's not a big part of it or anything but i mean, just in case, okay i think that's enough lol

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Characters: Carol (Stranger Things), Jonathan Byers, Nancy Wheeler, Steve Harrington, Tommy H. (Stranger Things)

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Summary:

Steve isn't usually a messy drunk, only when you combine two years worth of stress in regards to Jonathan Byers and Nancy Wheeler and then put them in front of him at a party when he's already had a bit too much to drink.

a messy drunk

It's not often Jonathan and Nancy decide to appear at a local party, after Halloween Nancy has become rather cautious around punch bowls and Jonathan had never really enjoyed the feeling of being pressed into corners by couples rubbing against each other, too lost in one another and the alcohol (and occasionally drugs; small town kids need entertainment somehow) to notice the added wheel to their bicycle.

Plus, the pair of them tended to steer themselves away situations that could turn disastrously wrong when they could, the disaster part coming from the massive crowds of people that often congregated around any party in town. The two much preferring to drink together, alone, in the comfort of Jonathan's bedroom when Nancy is supposed to be at Tina's and where Joyce was merely pleased Jonathan was acting his age for once in his life.

Steve Harrington, on the other hand, adored parties. He loved the buzz of alcohol in his veins, loved the first drink sliding down his throat and slipping through his bloodstream, wrapping up his anxieties in a warm blanket and laying them down to rest for the evening. He begun every party with a shot and a beer, hoping the alcohol would kick in as fast as it medically could. Keg stands tended to help speed the process along, plus it made Hargrove furious when he beat his record. Billy had been so proud in maintaining his records when Steve had abstained from participating, when there had been nothing better to do in his world than spend every second clinging to Nancy Wheeler and telling her she was beautiful.

Nowadays, he had no such girl to cling to. And thus, keg stands were reintroduced to his party routine, and Steve hated to admit he had missed them.

Alcohol alone was enticing, making him loose limbed and slippery tongued, caring less about who he grabbed around the waist, caring less about who he pressed into bathroom doors and less about who moaned back into him. Alcohol plus a cheering crowd, a cheering crowd of people who revered him, who remembered his name, who would notice if he didn't come to school the following morning. That

was addictive.

So while it was strange for Steve to find Nancy and Jonathan, curled around each other, sitting by an open fire pit, sharing a cup of something mixed. It was not strange for Nancy and Jonathan to find Steve, falling down beside them, leaning his head back against the chair that he could have sat in, if he had noticed it earlier, cradling an auburn bottle containing a liquid far too strong for the teen in his current state.

“Jonathan!” Steve cried, grinning lazily up at the pair, “Nance! What are you two doing here?”

“Drinking, warming up.” Nancy replied, shoving away Steve’s head as he leaned in closer towards them, threatening to rest his head against Jonathan’s thigh. If she and Jonathan hadn’t made their way through over half of the vodka bottle hidden beneath Jonathan’s coat, she might have plucked the bottle from Steve’s hands before he had a chance to lift it to his lips once more. But she had, and she didn’t.

“Well, yeah.” Steve drawled, a slight dribble of cider escaping down his chin, quickly caught by a rather clumsy hand, “I mean here,” Steve waved around his heavy hands, “At a party, I thought you two were socially stunted now.”

“Gee, thanks.” Jonathan huffed in a laugh, sipping from the cup held in Nancy’s hand, squinting his eyes to indicate a smile while his lips were occupied. He too, may have stopped the continuing downward spiral of Steve Harrington, if he wasn’t so preoccupied by the softness of Nancy’s hands and the way his head felt as though it was floating into the clouds.

Steve pushed his head down to land on Jonathan’s thigh, resisting Nancy’s hand shoving him away to nestle against the younger boy, “No! No. I didn’t mean it in a bad way, I mean like, Nancy has that effect you know,” Steve looked up through his eyelashes at the pair, dopey, brown eyes glazed over and earnest, “She just, makes you feel like no one else in the world matters, makes you wonder why you ever bothered talking to anyone else when you could talk to Nancy Wheeler.” Jonathan licked at his drying lips, sharing an amused look with the girl in question, who had stopped shoving at Steve and

instead running a hand through his hair, drooping now as the alcohol lowered his inhibitions.

"I get exactly what you mean," Jonathan assured, squeezing Nancy's hand tightly, grinning and pressing his lips against hers. Steve was nonplussed as he had closed his eyes, leaning heavily against Jonathan.

"See," Steve sighed, "I knew you would, I knew you'd be perfect for her, ya know? Because you are! You're so smart and lovely to her, you look after her. You took her home when she was wasted, do you remember that Nance? When you were so *wasted*. Oh my god, it was so funny until it got really scary and sad. But it was funny at the start, you should get drunk like you did at the start more often."

Nancy hummed, still distracted by Jonathan's lips against hers, a grin working its way onto her lips as she opened her eyes and saw the amused twinkle in Jonathan's own.

"But I knew you two would be perfect together. Cause Jonathan's so nice, he's so nice. He drove you home and told you I told him too! I didn't, Nance. I'm sorry. I'm sorry I didn't look after you back then, I'm so sorry." Steve pressed further into Jonathan's thigh, his eyes still firmly closed, his hand twitched at his side, attempting to reach up for Nancy and touch her arm, indicate just how sorry he felt. The movement proved to be too difficult, un-achievable and thus, Steve gave up on his arm like he had his sight.

Nancy leaned back from Jonathan, pressing a hand against Steve's forehead and stroking softly, "It's okay, Steve. It really is fine."

"No, it's not," Steve whimpered, tears pressing against his closed eyelids, Steve hoped they weren't falling, hoped no one could tell, "I think I'm gonna cry," He said instead, and bit his tongue harshly, fighting back the words that were seconds away from tumbling out in his warbling voice.

Nancy peeled her eyes off of Jonathan, the other boy leaning back, as they both peered down at Steve who's pale face was turned almost completely into Jonathan's leg, his body still swaying, "No, don't cry Steve," Nancy slipped off of Jonathan's lap, crouching down to face

Steve's limp body, "C'mon, what's wrong?"

"Nothing," the teen shook his head, nose smashed and mouth open, drooling against Joanthan's pants, Jonathan's hand fell down to Steve's head, petting it lightly, wincing as the wet patch on his jeans soaked through, "It's just, I'm sorry Nancy. I was a really shit boyfriend, I couldn't do anything."

"No, no you weren't Steve," Nancy took Steve's hand into her own, one hand holding his palm and the other rubbing at the back of his hand, tracing the veins lightly.

"Yes, I was," Steve moaned, choking on a sob as he did so, "I couldn't make you happy, you were *crying* all the time and you always snuck off and cried by yourself, you had nightmares too and you'd wake up and I couldn't do *anything* to make you feel better. I was just so *useless*."

"Steve," Nancy's voice was soft, she squeezed Steve's hand in hers, "That's not true."

"I know, you know," Steve plowed forward, leaning back away from Jonathan for a moment, blearily catching Nancy's gaze for a second before the weight of his head led him down, sprawled across the dirt, his head pillowed in Nancy's lap as she let go of his hand, "I know you and Jonathan did something together, when you ran away, after you said I was *bullshit*."

Jonathan froze, eyes flickering up to Nancy's own vaguely panicked ones, they had spent many nights debating whether they confess to Steve their one night affair, a result of the combination of their spiraling mental health and Nancy's declining relationship with Steve.

"I don't blame you though," Steve continued, rubbing against Nancy's legs, hand inching forward to cling to the grass, the ground somehow less stable now than it had been when he was resting against Jonathan's leg, "I get it. I wasn't good enough, and Jonathan is so, so good. He's so good for you Nancy. He understands, he can talk about it, he's good at this shit. I'm not. It's okay. I *get it*, I do."

The light from the fire caught on the tear tracks paved down Steve's cheeks, causing a stone to settle in Nancy's stomach at the sight. She'd never really seen Steve cry before. He'd always been stronger than her, resolute, brave, quiet in his grief. She knew he must cry sometimes, but she never truly expected to see it.

"You're good too, Steve," Jonathan said, climbing out of the chair and sitting down beside Steve, stretching out his legs and rubbing the other man's side.

"You're better," Steve insisted, mumbled into Nancy's jeans, "You're so much better. Nancy picked really well, you'll look after her, better than I ever could. You two are perfect together." Steve sighed heavily, thickly, as though it was getting harder to fit air into his lungs, "D'ya know, Nancy. I felt so much like my mom that night."

Nancy pursed her lips, her tear ducts threatening to kick into action, "Yeah?"

"Yeah," Steve's voice had thickened again, a sob rattling his chest and startling Jonathan, who could feel it's strength where his hand lay on Steve's ribs, "Cause she would always let my dad do anything he wanted, as long as he came back home, as long as he didn't abandon us completely, as long as she was around. I was hoping maybe if I just said it was all okay, if I let you and Jonathan go, that you might still come back." Steve sobbed again, his tears wetting Nancy's jeans, Steve's fists clenched into the dirt, his nail beds darkening with filth, voice shaking, "But you didn't come back."

"Oh, Steve. I'm so sorry." Nancy choked out, squeezing Steve's shoulders as Jonathan rubbed firmly up and down Steve's side, welling up with tears, the alcohol she had been drinking earlier allowing them to sneak up on her easier than usual.

"I thought you might want to keep me, if I was nice about it," Jonathan pressed his lips together, swallowing heavily as he caught the tears racing down Nancy's cheeks which she quietly pressed away with the inside of her wrist, "but you didn't want to keep me either." Steve's voice was fading now, his sobs dying out, his head becoming heavier in Nancy's lap, as though he was finally drifting away.

Nancy stroked Steve's hair, letting hot tears stream down her cheeks and pretending not to notice Jonathan's own scrunched face. Jonathan caught her eye eventually, his tightly pursed lips matching her own as they quietly comforted the drifting teen in their lap, Nancy's ex-boyfriend, Jonathan's bully, the man who'd saved them from a Demogorgon and then saved a troop of middle-schoolers from two rounds of monsters, both human and other worldly, 12 months later.

Steve had been quiet the past few months, quietly chauffeuring the kids around, quietly avoiding them at lunch, quietly nodding to them when they crossed in the hall with a shy grin, quietly slipping underneath their radar as his grades plummeted from the already lackluster standard Steve had set throughout his high school career. Almost unnoticeable, purely because he was so noticeable. Purely because Nancy and Jonathan had seen him in basketball games, had seen him and Billy pushing each other and arguing together, had seen him wasted and roaring with laughter, had seen him playing with the kids in the Wheeler's basement, causing Mike to laugh louder than Nancy had heard in months.

Steve had been so quiet and yet so loud, so loud that they hadn't noticed he'd been quiet about all the important things.

"Hey, um, is he alright?" A soft voice interrupted the trio, Carol had joined them out by the fire, her hands wrapped around a glass of water as she eyed the fallen Steve Harrington with a frown.

"I'm not sure," Jonathan replied, leaning back against the chair he had been previously sat in, "Hey, Steve?"

"Mhmm?"

"You alright?"

"Yeah," Steve moaned, paused to lick his lips and then shook his head, "No."

"No?"

"No."

"Do you want some water?" Nancy asked, Carol had squatted down beside Steve, the glass firmly held in her rather sober grasp. The older boy nodded, and Nancy moved her hands under Steve's head, pushing him up slightly, which caused the other boy to groan loudly and leaned heavily against Nancy's hands, propping him up.

"C'mon, Steve." Carol murmured, pressing the glass against his lips and tilting it up just enough to let the water roll between Steve's open lips, coaxing the liquid down Steve's throat. Steve swallowed once before moving away, jerking back his head and scowling harshly.

"Mm gonna be sick," Steve mumbled, leaning away from Carol, swaying dangerously, Jonathan reached out for the half empty bucket of kindle-ling used to light the fire pit which was crackling low beside them, pouring out the leftover twigs and stuck it under Steve's nose. Steve promptly filled it, groaning all the while, "I'm sorry Nancy, I'm so sorry Jonathan."

"It's okay," Jonathan promised, returning a soothing hand to Steve's back, rubbing lightly as Steve heaved. When it seemed as though Steve's stomach had calmed, and the retching had passed, Carol had pushed herself to her feet, taking the container with her and dumping the contents into the garden, leaving the bucket beside it for someone else to clean later.

"I wanna go now." Steve mumbled, twitching as Nancy wiped at Steve's lips with a tissue she'd found in Jonathan's coat. Jonathan had since stood, shrugging on his coat and preparing to find someone to give them a lift home.

"Yeah?" Nancy asked, as Carol crouched back down beside Steve, running sharpened nails across Steve's scalp gently.

"You want me to go get Tommy?" Carol said, smiling tightly as Steve nodded loosely, clinging to Nancy's leg before she stood and returned inside.

Jonathan looked around outside, checking they hadn't left anything behind before helping Nancy slide herself out from underneath Steve, gently lowering the older teen's head into the dirt for a moment

while they waited for Tommy. Jonathan would insist upon driving home although his head was still spinning, not quite as severely as he was sure Steve's was but well enough to keep him from feeling safe about driving anyone, anywhere.

Tommy appeared from the crowded lounge room, taking in Steve's slumped frame with a grunt and bending over the other teen, "Hey Steve, you think you can get up by yourself?"

"No." Steve whined, rolling on his back for a moment, eyes pressed firmly closed. It was then Nancy remembered Steve's biggest tell, one she'd failed to notice the moment he'd slumped against Jonathan but now was clear as day. Once the older boy had shut his eyes for the night, they wouldn't be opening until he deemed himself sober enough in the morning.

"Alright," Tommy grunted, he looked up at Jonathan, gesturing the other boy over, "Gimme a hand, yeah?"

Together the two boys situated Steve into a cradle position in Tommy's arms, much to Tommy's amusement, the teen grinned as he felt Steve's head slump against his chest, "I'm sorry, Tommy."

"It's alright, Steve." Tommy said, laughing lightly, as he gestured to Carol to open the back gate so that they could slip out to the front yard with slightly more secrecy than marching through the house.

Nancy hung back with Carol, the other girl holding the gate open for Tommy, Steve and Jonathan, "He do this alot?" Nancy asked, curious at the ease at which the two friends (although Nancy had been almost certain they weren't this close anymore), handled an overly-intoxicated Steve.

"Not too often," Carol reassured her, rubbing Nancy's arm lightly, and it was then Nancy realised that perhaps Carol was slightly more intoxicated than she let on, "every couple of months or so he lets it get away from him, accidentally most of the time."

"I don't think Jonathan can drive us home," Nancy worried, following behind the boys, Carol walking beside her, the older girls heel clicking as they walked along the pavement.

Carol laughed, "Tommy'll take you guys home, he hasn't been drinking."

"Oh, really?"

"Yeah, it was my turn for a bit of fun tonight," Carol grinned lightly at Nancy, her perfectly arranged hair growing wild in the late night wind, "Although I think Steve just stole it."

"Sorry Carol," Steve's voice drifted back to her, slurred and filled with regret, "I didn't mean to."

"I know, sweetie, it's okay," Carol soothed, as Tommy laughed again, tightening his grip around Steve as the lighter teen began to slip through his arms, Jonathan had moved to support Steve from the bottom a little, holding the weight while Tommy re-adjusted.

"I'm still sorry."

"No-one's upset with you, Steve," Jonathan assured him, brushing Steve's hair away from his face as they walked towards Tommy's car, parked relatively close much to Nancy's pleasure.

Steve flopped uselessly into the car once they had reached it, Jonathan opening the door and moving out of the way as Tommy shoved Steve's limp body into the back, shoving him right up against the far door and stepping away. Steve's head rested heavily against the window, his breath fogging up a portion of the glass as he dozed.

"In you get, Byers." Tommy then said, slapping Jonathan on the shoulder and moving to the drivers seat, nudging Jonathan out of the way slightly to open his door and clamber in. Carol had abandoned Nancy to slip into the passenger side, falling slightly as she missed the curb.

Jonathan shot a look at Nancy, almost asking for permission which Nancy provided in the form of a uncertain shrug, before falling in beside Steve, pressing against the drunk boys shoulders and making sure there was enough room for Nancy to sit beside him.

"Where am I going, then?" Tommy asked, flicking on his blinker and glancing around the emptying street, some teenagers still woozily

wandering across the asphalt but not in as great a number as they had been before, "Home, Harrington?"

"No!" Steve's cry was slurred but desperate, lurching forward slightly, pressing his forehead against the back of Carol's seat, "Not home."

"Didn't think so," Tommy muttered, easing out onto the road and cruising down the dark street, his headlights illuminating the street too brightly for the time of night. Jonathan almost felt bad for the people living in the houses surrounding the party, almost.

Nancy leaned her head against Jonathan's shoulder, growing tired as they moved away from the noise of the party, "We can't go to mine, either," Nancy mumbled to Jonathan, her lips against his neck, causing a shiver to run through him, "Mom'll kill us."

Jonathan sighed, scrubbing a hand over his face, "Can you take us to my place?" Jonathan asked Tommy who nodded, eyes darting to the street signs to catch the one he needed to take, smiling at Carol as she laid a hand over his that rested on the gear stick.

Steve slumped against Jonathan, his hair tickling Jonathan's neck and causing yet another shiver through his body that he could barely hide, both sides overcrowded with either Wheeler or Harrington, with Tommy and Carol watching on from the front. If anyone told Jonathan he'd be riding home in Tommy's car after a high school party, escorting a tipsy Nancy Wheeler and a wasted Steve Harrington back into his own home a year ago, he would've laughed in their face.

"Why aren't you drunk?" Jonathan asked Tommy, curiously. The older boy had always been more than keen to drink himself to an early grave, his sudden responsibility struck Jonathan as more than odd.

"He's my designated driver," Carol crooned, leaning over to press a wet kiss into Tommy's neck, said boy shrugged her off with a smirk.

"We take turns," Tommy added, glancing back at Jonathan in the rear-view mirror, "You should look into that Byers, I don't know how you planned on getting home tonight."

"Walking, probably." Jonathan responded, slumping back in his seat and watching the trees fly past out Nancy's window.

"Long way to walk," Tommy snorted, turning off onto the smaller road that lead to Jonathan's driveway.

Jonathan shrugged, eyes drooping slightly, but he couldn't fall asleep now, not in the back of Tommy H's car, of all people, "Why are you so good with Steve?" He asked, hoping to keep the conversation going, something to keep his eyes open.

Tommy snorted, "I've seen him like this more times than I can count, he's an easy drunk. Get him a bit of water, give him a bucket to throw up his guts in and then tuck him into bed. He won't fight ya."

"Right," Jonathan nodded sleepily, "Noted."

"I don't mind doing it," Tommy continued, turning down Jonathan's driveway and pulling up outside his home, dimming his headlights as he approached the house in an attempt of some degree of subtly, "He'd do the same for me."

Jonathan felt Steve's panting breath against his neck and nodded, smiling fondly as he remembered Steve's gentleness with Nancy, carefully guiding her into the bathroom before storming out later, only because Nancy had taken his heart and thrown it to the floor, stomped on it with her spiked heel and spat the words 'bullshit' and 'murderer' onto it.

Tommy stepped out of the car, moving around to the backseat and pulling Steve's door open, tugging out the sleeping teen and cradling him once again in his arms, waiting for Jonathan and Nancy to follow suit. With a gentle shove into Nancy's side, they both dropped onto the ground, Jonathan guiding the other three up into his house.

They sneaked past Ms Byers' open bedroom door, Tommy turning up his nose at the dirty appearance of the house. Jonathan couldn't bring himself to care at that moment, knowing the judgmental older teen would be disappearing in a few moments, the second Steve was settled down on Jonathan's bed.

"There we go," Tommy grunted, shoving Steve underneath the covers and pulling them up around the boy, patting his shoulder with a fond smile and turning to Jonathan and Nancy, nodding at them both. Jonathan followed Tommy to the door, leaning against the door frame as Tommy approached his car.

Tommy paused for a moment before he got to his car, spinning around and returning to Jonathan's front porch. Jonathan half-expected the teen to punch him, waiting for the twist of hatred that so often accompanied Tommy and his interactions. Instead, Tommy scuffed his feet and peered up at Jonathan with a resigned glare, "Look after him, okay? I don't know what fucked him up recently but it's something big and you two seem to get it so just," Tommy sucked a breath through his teeth, digging his hands further into his pockets and leaning away, nibbling on his bottom lip, "Take care of it, alright?"

"Y-yeah," Jonathan stuttered, "Yeah, we will."

"Good." Tommy nodded, pursing his lips and taking in the drab house, it's gutters collapsing and a clearly badly patched hole in the front wall, "You live in a shit hole Byers."

"Thanks, Tommy." Jonathan intoned, rolling his eyes as Tommy smirked at him, finally moving back to his car but not before calling out over his shoulder, "You tell anyone about this Byers and you're fucking dead!"

"Sure thing!" Jonathan called back, watching as the two disappeared, Carol's slim hand flipping him the bird through the darkness.

He didn't wait much longer to lock the door behind him and stumbled back down the hall, stripping off his jacket, shirt and pants before sliding into bed beside Nancy and Steve, all three of them half-naked and a bit too drunk. One of them (Steve), far too drunk, but also far too passed out to really care.

In the morning, Joyce didn't question the half-naked Steve Harrington heaving in her bathroom. Nor did she demand an

explanation when said teen disappeared back into Jonathan's room and she spotted him wrapped up in Nancy and Jonathan's arms.

At least they were acting their age, for once.

Author's Note:

HI! I hope you enjoyed this! It's loosely based of my last weekend (I am a VERY messy drunk lmao) so in order to try and emerge from the shame of last weekend (and all the weekends before that) I decided to make Steve suffer the very same embarrassment.

Thanks for reading~! If you wanna chat about Stranger Things I am more than willing to do that over on my tumblr @backyardbarf (lol i wonder what THAT means). I also posted this story there!